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# Nepal

## An overview of ELT, EAP and ESP in Nepal: Whose interest is served?

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### Abstract

This paper gives an overview of the state of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal in general and draws a link between ELT and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The researcher briefly examines the current situation at primary, secondary and tertiary level. The impact of this is assessed from a critical applied-linguistics perspective, to see how the English language has affected the society as a whole, particularly the English-vernacular (Nepali) divide in the country. The study concludes that the ELT situation in the country is far from satisfactory. The factors responsible for this are ineffective teacher education, the medium of instruction, language policies, university entrance examinations and a lack of resources.

### Introduction

The key aim of this paper is to give an overview of the current ELT situation in Nepal, with a particular focus on EAP/ESP at the tertiary level of education. It is linked with current practices in teacher education, the value attached to English language in society, the medium of instruction at state and private schools, the government's language policies and university entrance examinations, etc. This paper has sought to assess how English has assisted further social division, which is already acute. This has affected the state of Nepali and other local languages inside and outside the classroom. This study also discusses whether the medium of instruction has been a boon or curse to different English-language learners, depending on whether a learner is taught in a vernacular or English-medium institution. The latter may be at an advantage and the former will suffer, or rather is made to suffer, since they are deprived of studying major subjects such as pure or applied sciences due to their lack of English-language proficiency. At the same time, it can be argued that the English language and the ELT methodology(ies) as embraced in the West are appropriated to meet the needs of the participants/consumers. All these have played a huge role in EAP/ESP in general. This study has used available documents and studies to review the ELT situation in Nepal. The researcher has also incorporated his own

experience as an ELT practitioner, as well as a learner in a Nepali-medium state school in Nepal. The study begins with a background to education in Nepal. Then it concentrates on the key issues in ELT in Nepal, namely, teacher education, mediums of instruction, entrance examinations, language policies, and the impact of ELT on local languages and EAP/ESP in higher education.

## Background

Historically, education or literacy has always been a privilege of the elite or the higher caste in Nepal. By tradition, only Brahmins (top of the caste hierarchy<sup>13</sup>; see Bishwakarma, 2005, and Thekaekara, 2005, for more details on the caste system in Nepal and India) had access to education, which was in the Sanskrit medium in the early days (i.e., pre-1700 AD). Once Nepal was unified by King Prithvi Narayan Shah in 1769, a national language called Gorkhali emerged, which is now known as Nepali. This was the language spoken by the king and his subjects. All other languages were relegated or suppressed for political reasons. This may have been done in order to keep the newly conquered states under control, and prepare a platform to develop Nepali as a *lingua franca*. Yet, literacy was limited to either the rulers and the upper-caste people or the elite.

The situation became aggravated when the Ranas took over power in 1847 via a *coup d'état*, which is known as the darkest era of Nepal. The ordinary people were not allowed to receive any education, which was limited to those of the Ranas' palaces. If anybody was found providing or receiving education, they were hanged or exiled<sup>14</sup>. Worst of all, Nepal was completely shut off from the outside world for 104 years during the Rana oligarchy or autocracy. This is best captured below:

‘Nepal was kept in the worst form of isolation, backwardness and economic exploitation, and the country remained a feudal state controlled by the Ranas. Their only interest was the collection of revenue and the maintenance of law and order’. (Bista, 1994: 28).

<sup>13</sup> According to the caste hierarchy system, there are four levels: Brahmins, Chhetris, Vaishyas and Kshudras. Brahmins represent the top rung of the hierarchy, who have access to literacy/education and should teach other castes like Chhetris. Brahmins were typically priests, who were the source of information or knowledge. Next come Chhetris, who, by tradition, were the rulers, which is true at present, as the current king and the whole Shah dynasty belong to this category. The third category is Vaishyas, who were trade people. This is practised now too, since most business people come from this caste. The bottom rung of the hierarchy is represented by the Kshudras (or Untouchables, also known as Dalits; they are called Harijans in India). These were the people who were denied any education but were expected to work for the upper-caste people. They held various occupations, such as goldsmith, tailor, cobbler, etc. Strangely enough, if an upper-caste person touched the Kshudras by chance, they would have to be purified by sprinkling some holy water (gold-dipped) upon them, and Brahmins would have to replace their ‘holy thread’ with a new one. This clearly shows who has the power to make decisions concerning education and language policies in the country (see Bista, 1994 for details).

<sup>14</sup> If they belonged to an upper caste such as Brahmins, they would be exiled and their property would be confiscated; but if they were from the bottom rung of the hierarchy – the Kshudras, they would be hanged without question.

The first Rana Prime Minister, Jung Bahadur Rana, cleverly realized that he had to establish a good relationship with the British in India<sup>15</sup>. Therefore, he introduced English-language education into Nepal in 1850, which was, of course, in his own palace, for his children and close relatives. This was the beginning of English-language teaching in Nepal. The teachers were brought from either Britain or India, and the medium of instruction was in English (Eagle, 2000: 16). Furthermore, it was fundamentally for the males within the ruling class.

After the downfall of the Rana autocracy in 1951, more schools were opened and more people became literate. Nepal was finally open to the outside world, which had a huge impact on education and brought about changes. Education was made open to all, at least in principle. The first university, Tribhuvan University, was established in 1959<sup>16</sup>, which is the largest one in the country.

English language was no longer limited to the privileged. It was recognized as an international language and was introduced from grade four (ten year-old children) at school. Interestingly, it was made a compulsory subject, and is taught through to degree level at university. There is also a provision for optional English from Grade 9 onwards, which includes language and literature elements. This is reflected in higher education as well, since students can choose to study English language or literature in addition to compulsory English. However, the choice to study optional English depends upon social, economic and school background.

Now we move on to the key issues relating to the present ELT/ESP/EAP context in Nepal, which does not seem to have been explored in the context of Nepal. Additionally, this author believes that research into this area is sparse, especially in this context. According to Bhattarai (2000), there has been only one study conducted into ESP (English for medical students) by Pathak (1979). Hence, this review is to raise questions about the value of ESP/EAP (and ELT in general) in Nepal. While doing so, I will focus on the following issues, which I consider to be prominent for the present study: English-language teacher education; mediums of education; university entrance examinations; language policies; the impact of the English language upon the local languages, including Nepali; and ESP/EAP in higher education.

<sup>15</sup> Nepal has always been an independent country, despite the fact that the British declared war on Nepal and were defeated in 1814. However, it has always been influenced by what happens in India due to its geopolitical situation and cultural and linguistic similarities.

<sup>16</sup> Eagle (2000: 20) claims that it was organized in 1956.

## English language teacher education

General teacher training formally started in Nepal in 1951, with the establishment of the College of Education (now the Faculty of Education at Tribhuvan University). This was also the beginning of English-language teacher education too, and was mainly for secondary schoolteachers. This trend of emphasizing secondary schoolteacher training appears to have continued to the present day as well, as can be seen from the data published by the Ministry of Education and Sports (2005) below:

**Table 1: Number of teachers 1990 – 2003 (Total)**

Schools	1990	1995	2000	2003
Primary	71,213	82,645	97,879	112,360
Lower secondary	12,399	16,821	25,375	29,895
Secondary	10,421	14,585	19,498	23,297

**Table 2: Fully trained teachers 2000 – 2003 (Total)**

Schools	2000	2001	2002	2003
Primary	11,683	14,191	17,878	19,535 (17.38%)
Lower secondary	5,753	7,437	7,264	7,979 (26.69%)
Secondary	8,419	8,689	8,545	9,286 (39.85%)

From the data, it is clear that very few primary schoolteachers (17.38 per cent) are trained. This means there may be even fewer primary-school English teachers with appropriate skills and knowledge to teach English to young children despite this being a critical period in children's language development, often a controversial point in second-language acquisition research (for example, see Marinova-Todd *et al.*, 2000 and 2001, and Hyltenstam and Abrahamsson, 2001)<sup>17</sup>. In my own experience as an English-language teacher-educator in Nepal, English-language teachers in state primary schools use the grammar-translation method and chorus drills in their lessons. This is not unusual in secondary schools either. There is limited use of pair and group activities<sup>18</sup>, which are central to communicative language teaching (CLT) in the West. This is confirmed by a recent study conducted by the National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) (2002), which reports that a large number of the observed classes had no student activities, and the interaction between students was negligible. Due to the lack of interactive/communicative activities in English-language lessons, learners can hardly communicate in English when they move to a secondary school at the age of 12. This may be true in private schools as well but not necessarily, since their medium of education is in English. However, this needs further research.

<sup>17</sup> This is perceived differently in the Asia-Pacific region (for details see Nunan, 2003), which is true in the Nepalese context too. It is believed that the earlier the child starts learning a foreign language, the better they learn. This has not been investigated in Nepal, however.

<sup>18</sup> However, some well-resourced (private and autonomous) English-medium school teachers do employ these activities in their English-language lessons.

In order to enhance the teaching skills of primary schoolteachers, distance learning by radio has been running since 1976. The radio programme includes all primary-school subjects, such as Mathematics, Nepali, and English. However, there does not seem to be any study into the effectiveness of this kind of training. Hence, it is hard to claim that primary schoolteachers have gained any professional skills through this distance mode of training. Moreover, English-language teaching lacks textbooks in some remote areas, let alone supplementary materials. This situation is further coupled with inadequate preparation for teaching (NCED Report, 2002), since most of the primary schoolteachers are local residents who have other responsibilities, such as farming or running a shop<sup>19</sup>. As a result, they cannot afford time to prepare their lessons even mentally. This lack of lesson preparation may apply to secondary schoolteachers too, as reported in the NCED study (*ibid.*). However, such a situation clearly shows how well primary schoolchildren learn English. The picture may be slightly different at secondary level.

English-language teachers at Nepalese secondary schools are usually trained subject-specialists, due to the demanding nature of the subject and the secondary-school education regulation which requires teachers to have a BEd with a subject specialization. However, it is likely that teachers without such qualifications could be found if the head teacher and the management committee deemed that a teacher has the skills and knowledge to teach English (see Table 2 above, which shows the percentage [39.85 per cent] of the secondary schoolteachers). Furthermore, it may not be possible to recruit a qualified teacher in remote areas, and one may then find that the ELT picture in secondary schools is no different from that of the primary school. For example, learners would follow grammar-translation methods and structural drills despite the fact that the textbooks are written according to CLT and task-based learning (TBL) (for a sample page of a textbook see Stone, 1996, in Appendix 1), and that the secondary-school syllabus lays emphasis on communicative skills, as highlighted in the general objectives such as ‘develop an understanding of and competence in spoken English; communicate fluently and accurately with other speakers of English ...’ (Curriculum Development Centre, 1995). This contradiction between theory and practice raises several questions: How much skill can trained teachers transfer from their training to their everyday teaching? How practical or applicable are training skills? How effective is the current provision of teacher training? Can it be improved? The NCED conducted a study to explore some of these questions. The study showed that there was less transfer of training with regard to interactive activities, but this was attributed to the nature of training delivered to teachers, which was mostly lecture-based. Additionally, the study mentioned that a ‘lack of instructional materials, large number of students in the class, and reluctant teachers were the problems faced in relation to the transfer of the training in the classroom’, according to head teachers (NCED, 2002). However, it cannot be denied that these teachers are overworked. The other questions raised above need further investigation.

<sup>19</sup> Why they do or have to do this is a separate issue, which is associated with their earnings and family circumstances. This applies to learners as well. It is not possible to explore this issue here, however.

Besides the government's efforts, other concerned agencies have contributed to improving the profile of ELT in Nepal through in-service training. Such agencies include the British Council and the Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA)<sup>20</sup>. NELTA is the only umbrella organization for English-language teachers in Nepal from primary level to higher education. It organizes Training of Trainers (TOT) in various parts of the country. According to NELTA in 2006, 150 trainers were trained during the year (*The Rising Nepal*, 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2006). NELTA also brings together hundreds of ELT practitioners from across the country and the South-Asia region in its annual conference, which disseminates good practice in ELT.

## Medium of education and ELT

The previous section briefly examined the English-language teacher education scenario, which has some impact on the medium of instruction in schools and universities. There are two types of institution with regards to the medium of education: one is Nepali-medium (NM) and the other is English-medium (EM). Generally, state-aided and community schools offer NM education, where English is taught as a subject. Similarly, state-funded higher-education colleges follow NM education. However, colleges that provide Science, Medicine, Engineering or Computing use English as their preferred medium of instruction. On the other hand, all private schools and most of the higher-education colleges/universities deliver education in EM, where Nepali is taught as a subject. While 28.3 per cent of secondary schools are privately owned, the figure in higher education is considerably more (83.1 per cent). (For further details, see Ministry of Education and Sports, 2005). It can be seen that English is more widely used as a medium of instruction in higher education than at school. This will certainly have an impact on those students who graduate from NM schools, since it will be very difficult for them to pursue education in EM institutions (Ramanathan, 2005: 80-81). The reason is obvious, since the NM learners will not be prepared for EM education. This issue has not been explored in the context of Nepal.

Even though all private schools follow EM education, it cannot be claimed that the learners acquire enough competence in English. Rather, there is a bleak picture in some cases. Not all private EM schools deliver higher-quality EM education, perhaps because they are very much profit-orientated and recruit teachers without appropriate qualifications, since such teachers accept low salaries. Additionally, these schools do not have enough physical facilities and call themselves a 'boarding' school; they are everywhere, including some very remote places (Khanal, 1995). As a result, learners cannot communicate appropriately in English, nor can they perform well in Nepali since it is not given much importance. According to Upadhyay (1995, cited in Eagle, 2000: 50), these learners 'can neither write a single sentence worth reading in English or Nepali nor display analytical thinking that is the hallmark of an educated person' (see a similar case in Hong Kong, reported in Nunan, 2003: 597). There is a strong trend among parents to send their children to an EM school, which is often described as 'English-mania' because it has become a fashion.

<sup>20</sup> I have been a life member of NELTA since 1996 and was heavily involved in its activities at local and national level as a teacher-educator until 2002.



The problems described above are particularly true in those EM schools which offer education at a lower cost. My own experience of working in a well-resourced EM school for almost ten years and my visit to some local schools in the capital, Kathmandu, and Pokhara confirmed this. This means that the quality of education one receives absolutely depends upon how much one is able to pay for education<sup>21</sup>. This brings us back to the earlier issue of education being the privilege of the elite. Access to good EM schools is determined by one's earnings. That is why people of higher rank and with higher incomes in society can afford to send their children to a good EM school, while others with less income have to send their children to cheaper, low-quality EM schools. This is also confirmed by a study conducted in secondary schools in Kathmandu, which showed that the children studying at four leading EM secondary schools had very high family status, and the parents were highly educated – 82 per cent of the fathers and 51.5 per cent of the mothers had attended university (Watkins *et al.*, 1991: 37-38).

Until now, the government has not been able to monitor the quality or standardise the curriculum in EM schools. This has serious implications in society. A huge gulf is created in the community: social inequality. Children from rich families will always receive better EM education and have better careers, while those from poorer families receive low-quality EM education and are denied better career opportunities, not to mention the fate of NM students. Watkins *et al.*, (1991) also found that learners from poorer family backgrounds had a level of English inferior to that of those from well-off families. Hence, those in power continue to rule by applying the principle of 'divide and rule', which has been deeply rooted in the feudal society of Nepal for centuries. In this context, English has contributed to dividing the society and strengthening the grip of the elite over the people with low incomes (Ramanathan, 2005; Kachru, 1998). This situation could have been altered if the ELT situation had been better in NM institutions.

## University entrance examination and ELT

Whether a learner goes to an EM or NM school, they have to pass a national-level examination to study higher or further education. The examination is called the school leaving certificate (SLC), which is conducted at the end of Grade 10 throughout the country. There are nine subjects, such as Mathematics, Nepali, English, Science, etc. Learners must pass all the subjects to join a higher-secondary school, or pass at proficiency-certificate level at college. The SLC is often seen as a hurdle by students and parents (Shrestha, 2003). Many students fail in English and Maths, which are compulsory subjects. According to the Office of Controller of Examinations, the pass rate for the SLC in 2005 was 38.72 per cent, when 216,303 students sat the examination. The figure for Maths and English failure rates is not currently available, but these are usually the subjects, including Science, in which students fail (see also Eagle, 2000: 39). Those students who failed in Science or English might not need these subjects in their career even if they continue to study. However, they have to

<sup>21</sup> There are EM schools in Kathmandu which take tuition fees ranging from Rs.600 to Rs.80,000 (£5 to £700) a month.



study English at university. Interestingly, the failure rate in these two subjects, and specifically in English, is much higher in NM schools. According to an MOE report, the pass rate in NM schools was 36.4 per cent, while it was 82.9 per cent in EM schools in 2003. The other issue related to this national exam is the use of parallel versions of English-language tests, questioned since neither are properly trialled or validated (Shrestha, 2003; Bajracharya *et al.*, 2001). This needs more research that has not so far taken place.

In addition to the SLC examination, some science and medical colleges and faculties/institutes within the universities require students to pass an admissions test as an entry requirement. This usually includes English, Maths and Science, generally in EM. This system already discriminates against those learners who come from NM schools or who are better at Maths and Science, but may not be so good at English. Here again, the test favours the EM students who are familiar with EM education. In this context, the entrance examination in English works as a gatekeeper, allowing only those learners who are proficient in English to enter (Davies, 1997). This means that learners with fewer skills in English are denied access to Science and Engineering courses, which are often perceived as respectable subjects in Nepalese society. Had the ELT situation been improved in NM schools, NM school graduates would not have been prevented from accessing these courses. Or had there been no entrance test in English, these learners would have achieved their aspirations in these subjects. Many bright NM students have had to struggle hard in order to get through these tests; in fact, there are many commercial institutions in the big cities like Kathmandu which run coaching classes to prepare for these entrance examinations.

Most importantly, there has been no research into the validity of any of the English-language tests used in the entrance examination. The colleges develop their own test battery and so does the university sector. Additionally, there is no regulating body either. As a result, it is hard to say if these tests are fair or biased towards EM students because tests are often used to serve the tester's own interests or agendas (Shohamy, 2001). This issue has to be investigated further.

## Language policy and ELT

The new constitution of Nepal (Article 18, 1990) guaranteed the fundamental right of an individual to be educated in their first language in primary school. However, implementing the policy has not been successful. Consequently, receiving primary education in one's mother tongue has become a myth. The government has recognised English as an international language (one of the United Nations' five official languages of communication; the others being French, German, Russian and Chinese) (cf. foreign language). It has been defined as the language of science and technology. In academia, the English language is perceived as essential to modernization, better economic development and internationalization. In fact, English is the second most widely used language in the country after Nepali, even though there are at least 70 languages spoken in Nepal (Toba, 1992, cited in Eagle, 2000). However, according to *Ethnologue* (Gordon, 2005), there are as many as 123 languages spoken in Nepal.

Given the above linguistic situation, English appears to have gained more popularity than any local language. The obvious reason for this is the global spread of English and its use in Nepalese business, commerce and the media. English is the preferred language in academia or research. It is perceived that if one writes one's research report or findings in English, it is more respectable. Moreover, there is a belief among postgraduate students that they would be awarded better marks if they wrote their theses in English. Whether this is true or not has not been researched yet, and it would be an interesting issue to investigate as the research could be conducted in either Nepali or English. In relation to this, I remember a friend of mine who was an MA student of Sociology and who wanted to write his thesis in English, despite his excellent academic literacy in Nepali (as a Brahmin, he comes from the top rung of the caste hierarchy system) and poor skills in English. In the end, he wrote it in English and claimed that he received better marks. This example illustrates the unofficial recognition that the English language has been enjoying in universities. In my opinion, it has happened because the government does not have clear language policies or has not been able to implement them, which is reflected through its agencies such as the educational institutions. So, who is affected in this context? It is unquestionably the NM students, as they have pressure on them to use English in order to secure higher marks. If they write in Nepali, they will probably pass in the second or third division, whereas they may pass in the first division if they use English. This has an impact upon the vernacular languages, including Nepali.

## Local languages and ELT

The previous section has already pointed out that Nepal is a multilingual country, with many people being able to speak at least two languages: Nepali, their own mother tongue, Hindi, English, etc. Turin (2004: 5) confirms that the vast majority of Nepalese people speak at least two or even three or four languages. Educated Nepalese can speak at least three languages, namely, Nepali, English and Hindi. However, there is a concern that other minority languages other than Nepali are affected due to the official status of Nepali, which is also described as 'valorisation of official language' (Wikipedia, 2006). This is further compounded by ELT. English appears to be replacing Nepali because people in urban areas prefer speaking English or mixing 50 per cent English and 50 per cent Nepali (Rana, 2005). Watkins *et al.*, (1991: 37) too, reported that the majority of subjects (80.7 per cent), who were EM secondary-school learners, 'in their classes ... used a mixture of Nepali and English'.<sup>22</sup> Even worse are the FM radio programme presenters, as they speak 75 per cent in English and the rest in Nepali. It is interesting to note that by speaking English like this, urbanite youths believe that they have 'attained an upper class status', which may not be true (Rana, 2005). If this trend continues to grow, it will pose a threat to the Nepali language, which is evident from complaints made by Nepali language teachers

<sup>22</sup> However, it is not clear whether it was during lessons or at any time. If it is during lessons, it may be considered as a form of resistance to EM education.

about learners in leading EM schools, such as the Gandaki Higher Secondary Boarding School in Pokhara (source: personal communication). According to them, learners do not pay attention to Nepali language skills since it is taught as a subject rather than as a medium of communication or instruction, unlike English. Consequently, their proficiency in Nepali is deteriorating (also see Upadhyay, 1995).

On the other hand, local languages such as Newari, Gurung or Maithili already face the problem of being endangered because of Nepali. English has contributed to this further. The young generation does not seem to be attracted to their own language but to English, and it may be that after a decade or two, these local languages might be listed as endangered languages. In this particular case, English needs to be partly blamed because young people are demotivated to speak their indigenous language (also see Turin, 2004: 6).

Likewise, there are hundreds of thousands of people living in rural areas who cannot communicate in English simply because they do not need it in their daily life. They have been marginalized economically, politically, educationally, and culturally because of their inability to use English or even Nepali. In many cases it is an alien language, much worse than Nepali from the cultural perspective<sup>23</sup>. Hence, English plays a divisive role rather than an integrative one, generally favouring the urban population and the elite. With a role like this, English has also contributed to furthering a divide in society.

However, English as it is used in Nepal is different from that which is used in the ‘inner circle’ (traditionally, native-speaker countries such as the UK, Australia, the US) and the ‘outer circle’ countries of the ‘concentric circle’ model of the spread of English (for details see Kachru, 1998: 93-94). Nepal lies in the ‘expanding circle’ of the model, which is surrounded by India (‘outer circle’). Therefore, the English used in Nepal has its own identity with regard to accent and lexico-grammatical structures, even though there is some influence of the English used in India, and it appears to heavily follow the traditional British variety of English. In this case, it can be argued that English has been appropriated and nativized to suit the needs and demands within the country. A simple example can be drawn from the textbook used in grade seven, which uses Chankhey, a monkey character, throughout the book in conversations (Appendix 1). The monkey is a common wild animal found in the woods/forests near any village in Nepal. This may seem strange to an ELT practitioner in the West, as we always see things related to holidays or reading train/bus timetables in ELT course books rather than monkeys. In my opinion, it is a form of appropriation and nativization of ELT in Nepal (also see Ramanathan, 2005; Holliday, 1994; Canagarajah, 1999). This is an interesting issue to investigate further, beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>23</sup> In rural areas English is known as *gaikhane bhasha* (beefeater’s language), which is considered to be unholy since the cow is a national animal and is worshipped as a form of Goddess Laxmi (goddess of wealth).

## ESP/EAP in higher education

The focus of this paper so far has been the link between ELT, and education, language policy, local languages and entrance examinations in general. I am now going to briefly explore the current state of ESP/EAP in higher education in Nepal. ESP/EAP, as conceptualized in the West, is not a widespread form of ELT in Nepal. Some institutes/faculties within Tribhuvan University (TU) had 15 per cent of their English-language syllabi (pre-1995) devoted to ESP, which generally used texts from the relevant subject areas, such as Medicine, Agriculture, Law or Engineering. These institutes include the Institute of Medicine (including Nursing), the Institute of Engineering, the Institute of Law, the Institute of Agriculture and Veterinary Science, and the Institute of Forestry. Interestingly, the medium of instruction in these institutes is English. Currently, there is no ESP course within TU, nor is there any EAP course available. However, there is a perceived need for EAP in higher education, as was clear from comments made by ELT practitioners, the Vice President and the General Secretary of NELTA – the former working in TU and the latter working at Kathmandu University (KU) (source: personal communication, February 17, 2006).

The situation is not hopeless, since an attempt has been made to offer EAP-like courses at KU. The course is called Study Skills (see Appendix 2), which is ‘designed for postgraduate students with a view to equipping them with the study skills required for their level’. This means that there is no EAP course for undergraduate students at any university. There are other, new universities in Nepal, but they are still at the preliminary stage of their development. It is obvious from these facts that EAP, or study skills in English, is not perceived to be essential at undergraduate level. One reason may be that learners have the choice to write either in Nepali or English. Furthermore, academic textbooks for this level are available in Nepali. Therefore, it is not necessary to prepare students for reading or writing academically in English. It may also be argued that it is a form of resistance to the spread of English (Canagarajah, 1999).

In addition to students studying in higher education within the country, there is a marked trend towards going abroad, particularly to English-speaking countries, such as Australia, the USA, Canada and the UK, in order to pursue higher education. Those who want to go to these countries are required to demonstrate their proficiency in English. This is often shown through their scores in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) tests, which are considered to be relevant to academic study in English. There are many private providers in the capital, Kathmandu, which prepare students for IELTS or TOEFL. The British Council and the American Language Centre also have such provision for the respective tests. Private providers include the Universal Language Centre, Orbit Language, and Bud Language, to name but a few. They always charge heavy fees to students. The British Council and the American Language Centre are the most expensive providers since their fees are twice as high as those of the local providers. Here again, these courses are for those who can afford them. An ordinary person from a rural village would not be able to do so. The clients of these institutions are

always the elite and come from the higher castes in the caste system. Hence, EAP and ELT in general have led to the reproduction of class-based inequality (Lin, 1999, cited in Pennycook, 2004: 789). In other words, ELT has played a disintegrative role in the Nepalese context (Kachru, 1998: 103).

To summarize, EAP cannot be accessed easily by learners in higher education due to it being very expensive, and unavailable in cheaper universities like TU. This means that EAP has been serving the interests of the elite and higher-caste people in the country. In addition, it is available only to those learners who live in urban areas.

## Conclusions

This paper has explored the current position of ELT in the Nepalese context, which is still under-researched. From the available data and studies, it can be concluded that English-language teachers are not adequately trained to teach at school, despite the efforts made by such organizations as NELTA. Likewise, EM schools have created more complications due to the lack of appropriate standardization and monitoring from the government. Furthermore, they are often only associated with the rich. On the other hand, NM learners have suffered due to the preference given to EM in higher education. Higher education is made more inaccessible for NM learners by the imposition of entrance examinations in English, which has often favoured EM learners. The government does not seem to have clear language policies, which has had a negative impact on educational institutions regarding which language to use, particularly in higher education. It has also been pointed out that ELT has become especially popular among the young generation, and in the cities. As a result, ELT has become a threat to Nepali and many other local languages. Regarding EAP/ESP in higher education, there is very little space given to it, and it is limited to only the privileged. Overall, ELT does not appear to belong to the common people or learners but to those who already have access to better resources and power in society. The resources are not allocated equitably in relation to ELT. It is the ELT practitioners' job to create possibilities of fair access to ELT for all sections of society. It is necessary to investigate these issues further, and find ways of delivering ELT/EAP effectively to all learners.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

## 2

## MEETING PEOPLE AND GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

### 2.1 Read and find out the name of the visitor.



**Practise, learn and act the story.**

The new school year has just begun. An important visitor has come to Shakti High School.



### 2.2 Pairwork: practise saying 'Good-bye' to a visitor.



Good-bye, Sir.  
It was good to  
meet you.

Good-bye,  
Shambhu. Thank  
you for all your help.



## 3

## GETTING INFORMATION

3.1 Read about Grade Seven's maths lesson, and answer the questions.



1. What are Shambhu and Sabitri doing?
2. How does Chankhay help them? How tall is the tree?

3.2 Pair work: practise asking and answering these questions.



"How tall's Iswor?"

"He's 150 centimetres tall."

"How heavy is he?" "50 kg."

"How wide's the river?" "It's 100 metres wide."



## Appendix 2

### Current Study Skills syllabus from Kathmandu University

#### *Study Skills and Academic Writing*

Course No:

Credit 2

Nature of the course: Theory and practice

#### *Course Description*

This course is designed for postgraduate students with a view to equipping them with the study skills required for their level. It provides them with the functional skills to use library and other resources, including the Internet. In addition to developing reading for academic purposes, students will be introduced to academic writing which uses conventional style for citation and referencing. Orientation will also be given for continuing professional development for the future.

#### *Course Objectives*

The objective of this course is to enable students to:

- Apply various reading techniques
- Analyze texts in terms of organization, non-linguistic and linguistic aspects
- Use dictionaries, reference materials and other resources
- Use basic elements of formal academic writing
- Take notes from lectures, recorded and printed materials
- Be aware and follow professional development strategies

#### *Course Contents*

Unit I: Use of dictionary, encyclopaedia and thesaurus

Unit II: Reading for academic purposes

Skills involved in reading

Reading techniques

Aspects of reading for academic purpose

Organization of the text

Non-linguistic response to the text

Linguistic response to the text

- Unit III: Note taking and note making  
Skills of identifying, distinguishing and diagramming
- Unit IV: Information gathering skills  
Library resources  
Internet resources  
Gathering primary and secondary information
- Unit V: Academic writing  
The purposes  
Aspects of composition  
Strategies for improving writing  
Stages in writing  
Citation and referencing
- Unit VI: Composition of various types of writing  
Letter writing  
Essay/article writing  
Summarizing  
Writing reviews  
Research reports
- Unit VII: Continuing professional development  
Assisted professional development  
Self-directed professional development

Methods of Teaching	Evaluation Scheme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration</li> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Illustration</li> <li>• Practical work</li> <li>• Presentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz</li> <li>• Tests</li> <li>• Term paper</li> <li>• Final examination</li> </ul>

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